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## Human Resource Management and Healthcare Sector of Pakistan

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### **Abstract:**

In recent times, human resource management has gained more attention in the healthcare systems. The relationship between human resources and health care system is quite complex and demand a balance between the human and physical resources. Pakistan's healthcare is going through a very critical phase. On one hand under the 18th amendment the health sector is fully devolved to the provinces from federal government and on the other hand there is an ever increasing pressure in achieving United Nation's Millenium Developoment Goals (DGs). And as per the "National Health Vision of Pakistan 2016 – 2025". Human Resource in health is the most critical factor regarding health provision in terms of quality and amount, both in perspective of prevention and cure. Not only population ratio of doctors and dentists is critically low in Pakistan, as compared to all other countries but also the ratio of paramedics, nurses and other health workers. Apart from this wrong placement and non-utilization of competent staff and failing to retain them and providing them favorable environment are the elemental issues of human resource management and are truly existing deficiencies in our health care system and are directly concerned with.

**Keywords:** *Healthcare, Human Resource in Pakistan, Environmental Issues, resources, Hospitals, NGOs*

## INTRODUCTION

The healthcare system of any country have significant influence on the well-being of individuals and the nation as a whole. The sector has become an assertive political and economic issue in most of the countries due to its ever increasing magnitude.

The human race has witnessed impressive advancements and achievements in the twentieth century and especially during the past few decades. In the last 40 years life expectancy has been increased whereas the fertility is on decline which has never been observed during the previous 4000 years. This significant gain in health and quality of life are mainly the result of achievement and development of healthcare sector, addressing and delivering to the broader community/population.

Hence, most countries have been experiencing a swift increase in health care expenditure due to rise in the cost of health services, changes in population structure (rapid aging), new and improved technological services, and changing socio-economic conditions. Subsequently, health economics has become a crucial issue to achieve efficient health expenditure, avoiding resource wasting and maximizing patient welfare. In this context, to avoid weaknesses and poor performance and implementation of effective policies, human resource management is inevitable. Human resource management is define as the model of fore planning human resource deployments and avocation aimed to capacitate an organization to fulfill its objectives. HRM is a set of organisational activities directed towards attracting, developing, and maintaining efficient human capital in order to accomplish organizational objectives. According to Frederick Taylor (father of scientific management), on HRM practices in the areas of recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal and the development of an appropriate reward system are still valid and highly influential. HRM involves the recruitment and selection of the right employees for the right positions,

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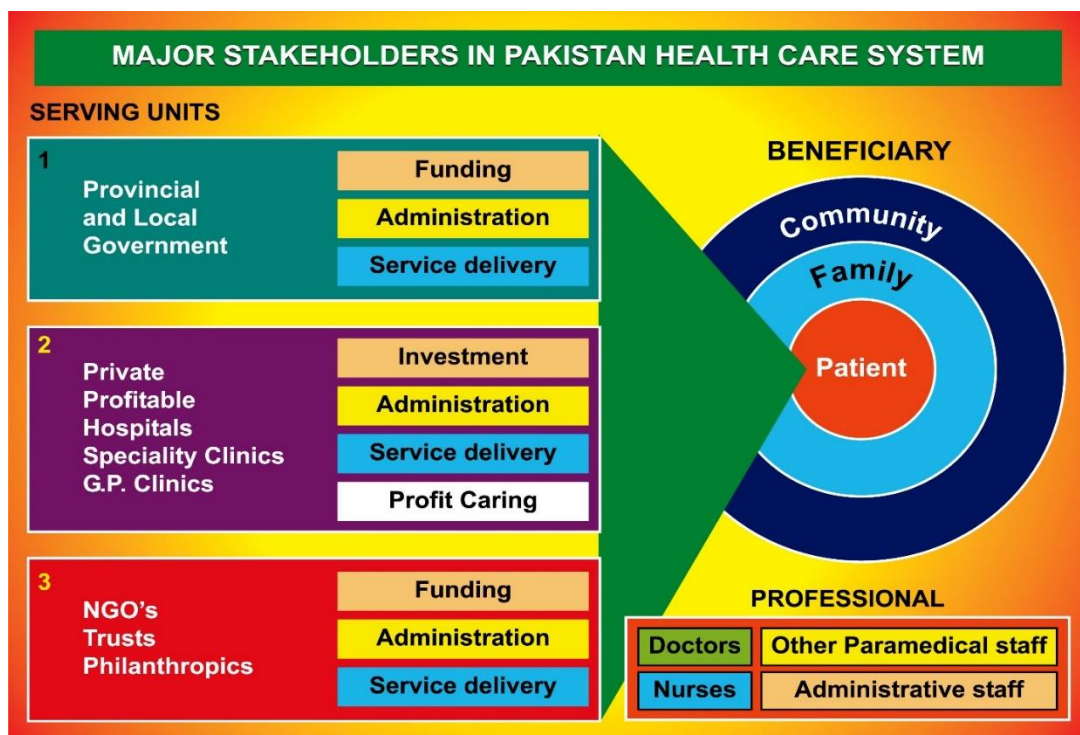
providing relevant training, establishing an adequate performance appraisal system and establishing an equitable compensation and reward system.

In present time HRM is regarded as a sustained source of competitive advantage for organizations operating in a worldwide economy (Zheng, 2001; Chang & Huang, 2005; Chandrakumara & Sparrow, 2004). In response to this, many future-thinking organizations are struggling to establish a positive and dynamic organizational climate through HRM practices, in an attempt to retain and sustain valuable employees (Chew & Chan, 2008; Milne, 2007; Heraty & Morley, 1998). These practices include ensuring a good fit between the values of the organization and the individual employee (Heraty & Morley, 1998); providing adequate opportunities for training and development; developing an equitable compensation system that rewards high performance; recognising employees' contributions and efforts in the performance appraisal phase; and providing employees with appropriate, interesting and challenging assignments (Yeganeh & Su, 2008; Chew & Chan, 2008; Carraher, Gibson & Buckley, 2006; Morrow, 2001). These practices and policies aim to improve employees' attitude by shaping their behaviours and skills (Nehmeh, 2009; Mosadeghrad, Ferlie & Rosenberg, 2008; Chew & Chan, 2008; Chandrakumara & Sparrow, 2004; Elizur, 1996; Huselid, 1995).

### **Healthcare Sector in Pakistan:**

Pakistan's healthcare is going through a very critical phase. On one hand under the 18th amendment the health sector is fully devolved to the provinces from federal government and on the other hand there is an ever increasing pressure in achieving United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Pakistan is providing health care facilities to its population through different sources which are mainly divisible in to two major

components, government's own health infrastructure and private health service providers. Another emerging sector is civil society, Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) and philanthropists who're trying to provide or providing low-cost or free of cost health services to the public.(Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1. Showing major stakeholders in Healthcare sector of Pakistan.**

Though it's difficult to calculate exact percentage of each one's contribution to the whole system and to well demarcate the exact areas of operation but still a careful estimate reflects that government health structure is catering not more than 30% of all. Another fact is that government sector plays major role in promoting preventive and community health services while the private sector, instead of having potential, contributes least towards these most important areas. Hence the main burden of community and

preventive health services comes to the shoulders of government sector that already faces the challenges of vertical service delivery structures and low performance accountability within the government, creating efficiency and quality issues. The public sector is inadequately staffed and job satisfaction and work environment need improvement.

### **Organizational structure of Public health sector in Pakistan**

Government has established a health delivery network all over the country comprising of:

#### **Primary Health Care Units:**

These Primary Health Care Units are basically providing Primary level health services and usually not having the facilities of specialist clinics, emergency dealing, hospitalization facilities, surgeries and investigation procedures. Primary Health Care System of government is composed of Basic Health Units (BHU's) and Rural Health Centers (RHC's). BHU is the most basic unit serving about 1000 to 3000 patients and it's first referral is to the Rural Health Center (RHC) which is the next step of primary health care system. These PHC's are managed and observed by District Health Officers who is responsible for the smooth running and performance of all Rural Health Centers existing in his district and addressing their day to day matters. While each Primary Health Care Units, either RHC or BHU, are headed and run by qualified graduate doctors who might have a good exposure of medical field but don't have any qualification in Human Resource management.

#### **Secondary Health Care Units:**

Secondary Health Care Centers are basically those medical centers or hospitals who're providing secondary level of health care to the population including general clinics,

specialist clinics, round the clock emergency dealing, hospitalization facilities, surgeries and a reasonable range of investigation procedures.

At government level secondary care hospitals are also providing secondary level health care like specialist clinics, emergency dealing, hospitalization facilities, moderate level surgeries, and a reasonable range of investigation procedures to not only the urban population but to the surrounding rural population as well. Good examples of these Secondary Health Care Units at government level are Taluka or Tehsil Head Quarter (THQ) hospitals and District Head Quarter (DHQ) hospitals. These DHQ's are mostly headed and run by either simple graduate doctors or specialists who acquire this position on seniority basis either by qualification or by length of service. Whoever comes to this post might have a good exposure of medical field but again don't have any qualification in Human Resource management.

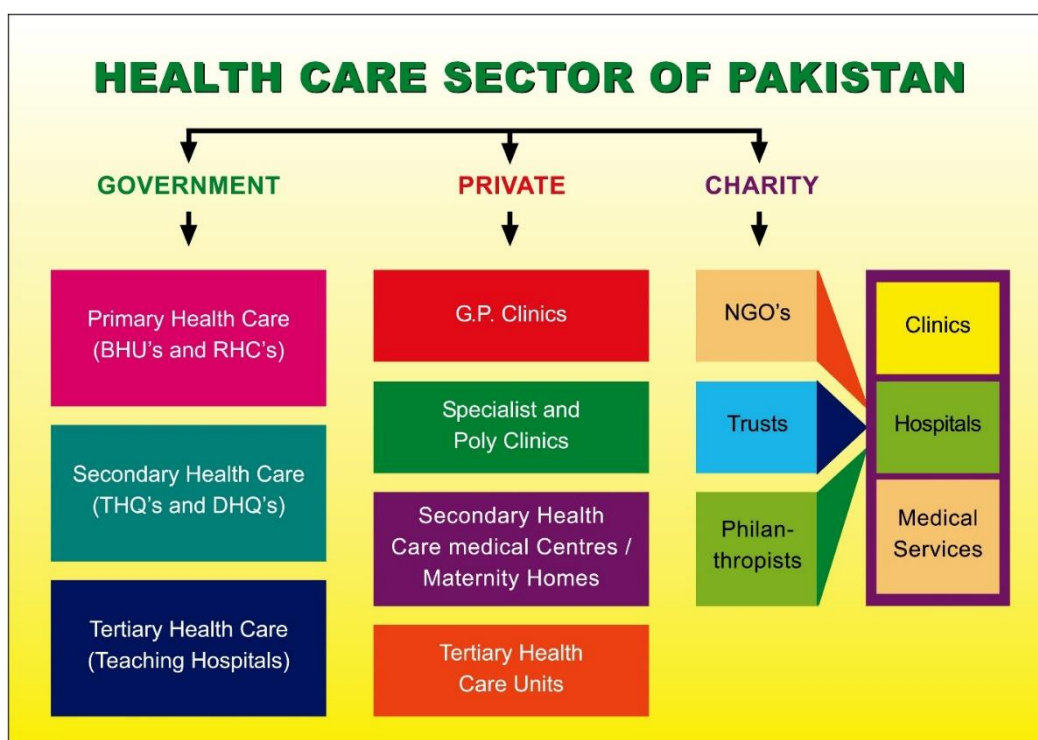
### **Tertiary Care Units:**

Tertiary Care Units are actually big hospitals providing facilities of consultation with highly qualified consultant doctors, high level surgeries, round the clock emergency cover, hospitalization facilities and a wide range of general and specialized investigation procedures. These may be multi-specialty or dealing some specific specialty.

Examples of Tertiary Care Units at government level are JPMC (Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre), LMCH (Liaquat Medical College Hospital) Hyderabad etc. Unfortunately the federal health ministry in Pakistan has been dissolved in recent past and the sole responsibility of health care has been transferred to the provincial Governments. Here again is the same story that these tertiary care hospitals are mostly headed and run by consultants who acquire this position on seniority basis by qualification as well as by length of service. Whoever comes to this post might have a

good exposure of medical field but again don't have any qualification in Human Resource Management.

The overall health sector also faces an imbalance in the number, skill mix and deployment of health workforce, and inadequate resource allocation across different levels of health care i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2. Organizational structure of healthcare sector in Pakistan.**

### **Private Health Care System:**

On the other hand, private sector has an important role in Pakistan's healthcare delivery system which has grown very rapidly during the last three decades. This sector now consists of different level players who provide services in both rural and urban areas.

These service providers include individual private practitioners who provide primary level care, owners of small and medium poly-clinics, medical centers and maternity homes who mainly provide secondary care and a number of large corporate hospitals that provide tertiary level care. This sector caters the needs of both urban and rural populations through a wide network of health care facilities and has expanded widely to fulfil the demands, increasing day by day.

This is fact that in order to produce quality workforce for health sector, the health service delivery in terms of quality, both in public sector as well as in private, need to be looked into and a range of actions is needed to achieve a broader impact and a real outcome.

### **Significance of Human Resources in Healthcare System:**

In recent times, human resource management has gained more attention in the healthcare systems. And globally it is considered as one of the three principle pillars, alongwith two others i.e. physical capital and consumables. In healthcare system, human resource refers to all medical, paramedical and non-medical staff, not only working in hospitals and clinics but also in the field including health workers who intervene individual's health among public. Maximum output of the system can never be accomplished without perfection, knowledge, skills and devotion of this human resource for which their grooming through trainings, incentives, motivation and encouragement is must and this complicated, delicate and difficult task cannot be obtained without inculcating human resource management means and mechanisms with health care system.

The integration of human resource management with health care system is definitely a complicated issue and a difficult task where a very delicate harmony between the human resources and physically available medical and technical resources is to be maintained. Another issue is to maintain a pertinent equilibrium among different sort of health



providers working under the state organization or independently, to achieve the maximum favorable outcome from the health delivery system. As there is a gross difference between humans and the equipment so is the difference between handling them accordingly, securing them and their interest along with the outcome as whole as well and this much delicate balance can never be managed without using human resource management skills.

On the other hand the health care provision is becoming more and more expensive day by day due to sustainability issues of our economy which results in price hike of the material e.g. medicines and surgical disposables along with the services e.g. lab and radiological investigations, consultations, emergency medical aid and hospitalization etc. There are very few government setups or health organizations who're providing all health facilities totally free of cost, the number of which in counting wouldn't be in double figure, otherwise services are free in government and charitable setups but burden of material and investigations go to the patient's pocket. This way health facility for a common man is available either fully private or partially.

The human resource management addresses this issue by providing training to the all medical and para medical staff to curtail unnecessary medication and investigations, proper placement of competent staff at right place to trim unnecessary referrals and ascertaining people's presence on duty to avoid compelled or negligent diversion of patients towards private setups.

## **DISCUSSION**

Observation on the relationship between the health care sector and human resources management in Pakistan reveals three vital issues to be addressed; ever increasing healthcare cost, a growing number of patients towards government health care

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institutions, shortage of skilled health professionals. Hence it is apparent that human resources management is not only compulsory for the remodeling of the whole health care system but its ideology, methodology and strategies can play a substantial role in the re-construction of patient's health care delivery system. Its significance in this regard demands not only realization but further probing and experiments to find out newer aspects and more advantageous explorations to benefit the system, patient and the population over all.

First and the most primitive step to integrate Human resource management with health sector is to follow the merit everywhere, either appointments or deployments. The purpose of this action is to obtain good and effective health services through good, systemic planning. Stepping forward in this direction, not only the adaptation of new systems to protect finances is necessary but also re-shuffling of staff placement is must. This way people working as human resource professionals in health organizations can enhance the equity among health workers and other staff members.

Human resource management integration with health services sector have also sought to enhance the quality of health service as well as patient's pride and satisfaction. There are generally two kinds of health care quality, one is quality of technical services while the other one is quality of social and cultural behavior and impact. Technical quality in fact is the utilization of most modern techniques available and all possible measures to be taken for the best possible treatment of patient which in turn has a good impact on the overall population with regard to the health services while social and cultural quality of health service is actually the reflection of patients acceptance of all the services provided regarding health as per their expectation.

## CONCLUSION

Healthcare is becoming expensive due to the technological advancements and new paradigm of treatment/procedures. Hence majority of the population opt for public healthcare institutions leading to building up of pressure/burden. Therefore, conventional process/procedure of staff hiring (technical and professional) would not be feasible. Therefore, it is inevitable to overcome this deficiency by implementing proper human resource management practices which would not only effect to conserve fiscal budget but also enhancement of capacity towards patients welfare.

In most of the countries citizens health, has become a state responsibility, influencing competitiveness of modern economies. The maximization of social welfare and value for taxpayer's money is of crucial concern leading to efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Therefore, massive reforms through extended research on impact of human resources management need to be adopted in both the public and private health sector of Pakistan.

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